



# Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov)

## *Campylobacter enteritis*

<b>What Is <i>Campylobacter enteritis</i>?</b>	Campylobacteriosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It is the most common bacterial cause of diarrhea in the United States. Almost all cases occur as isolated, sporadic events, not as part of large outbreaks. Most cases go undiagnosed or unreported. Estimates are that it affects over 2 million persons every year, or 1% of the population. Campylobacteriosis occurs much more frequently in the summer months than in the winter.
<b>What are the symptoms?</b>	Most people who become ill with campylobacteriosis get diarrhea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever within 2 to 5 days after exposure to the organism. The diarrhea may be bloody and can be accompanied by nausea and vomiting. The illness typically lasts 1 week. Some persons who are infected with <i>Campylobacter</i> don't have any symptoms at all.
<b>How is <i>Campylobacter enteritis</i> treated?</b>	Almost all people infected with <i>Campylobacter</i> recover without any specific treatment. Patients should drink plenty of fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts. In more severe cases, antibiotics might be used, if they are given early in the illness. Your doctor will make the decision about whether antibiotics are necessary.
<b>How do people catch this disease?</b>	Campylobacteriosis usually occurs in single, sporadic cases. Most cases are associated with handling raw poultry or eating raw or undercooked poultry. Even one drop of juice from raw chicken contaminated with campylobacter can infect a person. One way to become infected is to cut poultry meat on a cutting board, and then use the unwashed cutting board or utensil to prepare vegetables or other raw or lightly cooked foods. The <i>Campylobacter</i> organisms from the raw meat can then spread to the other foods. The organism is not usually spread from person to person, but this can happen if the infected person is a small child or is producing a large volume of diarrhea. Larger outbreaks due to <i>Campylobacter</i> are not usually associated with raw poultry but are usually related to drinking unpasteurized milk or contaminated water. Animals can also be infected, and some people have acquired their infection from contact with the infected stool of an ill dog or cat.
<b>What can be done to stop the spread of this disease?</b>	<p>Be sure to cook all poultry so that the meat is no longer pink and any juices run clear. If you are served undercooked poultry in a restaurant, send it back to be cooked completely.</p> <p>You should wash your hands with soap before <b>and</b> after handling raw meats. Prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen by using separate cutting boards for foods of animal origin and other foods. Be sure to clean all cutting boards, countertops and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing meat. Don't drink unpasteurized milk or untreated water.</p> <p>Make sure that persons with diarrhea, especially children, wash their hands carefully and frequently with soap to reduce the risk of spreading the infection.</p> <p>Wash hands with soap after having contact with pet feces.</p>

**SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL**

Region 7

Serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties

Public Health Office • 4050 Bridge View Drive • Suite 600 • N. Charleston, SC 29405 • Phone: (843) 746-3800 • [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov)